

Gamlingay Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers
summarised by

Mike Petty



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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News. They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library together with have detailed cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check. There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1897 03 10

Gamlingay: Very wet weather has been experienced in this district for some time past and fine weather is now very urgently required. The clay land has lacked the pulverising influence of frosts and the heavy rains have beaten the land down to such a tenacious mass that drilling will be very difficult and unsatisfactory. The mild winter has enabled the farmer and grazier to keep his stock on the grass. A short time ago a visitor at Gamlingay was changing trains at Ely when his attention was called by the stationmaster to the novel view of about 60 rats "up a tree" near the station. The heavy rains had flooded the district including a farmhouse and yard, and the rats to escape drowning had mounted the tree

1897 08 19

Guildhall rebuilding – Belcher scheme, buy houses, p3
Gamlingay Baptist church organ chamber, p4

1898 01 02

Interview J. Hall, Gamlingay

1898 03 16

A fire broke out in the evening upon premises at the back of the Chequers inn and adjoining the large wood stores of Mr Thomas Cox, of Gamlingay. A large crowd soon assembled in the street and by the help of ladders, pails of water were thrown down the eaves of the house to keep the blaze from spreading. Meanwhile from the street the same work was carried on, and a large butt of water emptied of its contents. On the opposite side of the road the inhabitants poured water upon their thatched cottages to save them from flying sparks. A messenger was hurriedly dispatched for the Potton fire brigade, who arrived very promptly, but there was no occasion for them to get the engine to work. Luckily there was no wind, and the barns were old and soddened, or there must have been a disastrous blaze in the immediate neighbourhood. One of the greatest constituencies that visiting fire brigades have to contend with, is a lack of water, and is a plan could be found whereby the large pond known as The Pits could be kept full, the first steps towards avoiding tremendous blazes would be made.

1898 06 30

Gamlingay child neglect, p2

1900 05 21

Sounds of cheering in the streets, long-drawn calls of the “buzzers” at the brick works, shrieks of steam engines, ringing of bells, announced in Gamlingay the relief of Mafeking. Shops and houses showed bunting, several flags were as large as tablecloths, notably those at Mr Jiggle’s premises, the double Jack at Fowler Bros and the flag of the British Naval Reserve at Mr J. Gears’

1900 08 23

Gamlingay Three Horseshoes, p2

1900 11 29

Gamlingay publican, p3

1901 02 05

There was an extraordinary scene at Gamlingay church. Mr Kensit and two Wickcliffe preachers occupied a pew immediately in front of the rood screen. Everything went on quietly until the point in the service where the bread and wine are blessed and on the vicar raising the same and bowing a cry of “blasphemy” rang though the church. Then the three objectors quietly stood up in their places. Mr Kensit said: “As a loyal Churchman I protest against this service. This is blasphemous”. In a moment the church was in uproar. Men ran from the choir stalls and surrounded the protestors. They left the church followed by two-thirds of the congregation.

1901 02 06

Kensit crusade, Gamlingay

1901 02 28

Gamlingay Protestant crusade, p2

1901 03 06

Mr J. Kensit, described as a Wycliffe preacher of London, was to have appeared before the Caxton Magistrates to answer a summons "that at Gamlingay church he was unlawfully guilty of riotous, violent or insolent behaviour during the celebration of divine service and did molest and misuse the Rev William Crouch". Defendant did not appear and the case was adjourned.

1901 03 12

Kensit crusade, Gamlingay

1901 03 21

At Caxton Petty Sessions the court was completely packed for the summons against John Kensit for brawling in Gamlingay church. He was away in Ireland assisting his father in a Protestant crusade and not able to be present in person. Defendant's solicitor objected to all the magistrates on the Bench on the grounds they were prejudiced and biased. They convicted Kensit on a charge of indecent behaviour and ordered him to pay a fine of £3

1902 01 15

Gamlingay child death, p3

1903 10 23

Some inhabitants of Gamlingay imagine they are on the verge of acquiring riches. In the serial running in "Tit Bits" the publishers have inserted clues indicating the whereabouts of hidden gold. Lately a considerable number of strangers have been prowling round the "Old Moon" in the hope of unearthing £100. The inhabitants of the Cinques have not been slow to make their own deductions; a systematic search is being carried on and excavations are being made by those afflicted with the gold fever.

1908 12 25

A curious situation developed after the chaplain of Caxton workhouse resigned and the Guardians decided to ask the vicar and the Baptist minister of Caxton to share the duties and divide the salary. There were Nonconformists in every district and it was only fair they should receive equal rights. They got a large number of inmates from Gamlingay where there were two Nonconformists to every Church of England person. CWN 08 12 25

1909 01 01

The Christmas holidays passed off very quietly in Gamlingay and there were but few attractions to entertain the visitors to the village, who were not so numerous as in former years. With the exception of the gaily-dressed shop windows there was little to show that the festive season was near and tradesmen generally were complaining about the slackness of the trade. The only outdoor attractions were two football matches at which there were large crowds and the Christmas of 1908 may be termed an indoor one. CWN 09 01 01

1910 08 05

An assistant master at Gamlingay school was fined a sovereign for hitting an 11-year-old lad across the ear three times with a book. The hits were hard ones which drew blood and caused a headache. The mother had not the slightest objection to proper punishment being administered with a proper instrument but no master was entitled to strike a boy on the head with the kind of book used in this case. The teacher said the lad had refused to give his number and made grimaces. 10 08 05

1910 11 04

Advocates of votes for women made their first platform appearance at Gamlingay, a crowded meeting being held in the Boys' Council Schoolroom. Mrs Rackham from Cambridge said she did not believe in the actions of the militant suffragettes. They were not asking for women to go to Parliament but women were taxed like the men and ought to vote like them. However Mrs Stanley of Merton Grange thought it would be a terrible thing if in future England were governed by women. (Applause). It would mean 'petticoat government' and they did not want that. (Applause). The majority of ladies did not want the franchise and 400,000 of them had petitioned against 'votes for women'. The meeting rejected the idea. 10 11 04b

1910 12 09

During the election campaign Mr Newton's meeting at Cottenham was interrupted by people making a tremendous din, hooting, shouting, singing popular songs and blowing mouth organs and tin whistles. Some rowdies resorted to the peculiarly offensive practice of throwing eggs but were unwise in their choice of targets for one egg struck the Deputy Chief Constable in the back of the neck. The disturbances were not confined to one side: during Mr Newton's meeting at Gamlingay a number of sparrows, decorated with the Liberal colours, were liberated and a cracker was thrown upon the platform which jumped about in the usual lively and erratic fashion before it was extinguished. 10 12 09b

1911 01 20

Dr Jenkins of Gamlingay told the court that as a medical practitioner he had to go out in all weathers. His car had been 'laid up' so he'd biked to an urgent case. The mud on the road was up to the hubs of his bicycle so he had cycled on the pavement, otherwise his boots and trousers would have been in such a condition that he could not have presented himself at the patient's house. The ratepayers had protested against the condition of the road which had got worse every year since the County Council had had it. But the magistrates said that doctors must keep the laws the same as anyone else and fined him seven shillings. 11 01 20c

1911 08 11

A disastrous fire occurred at Gamlingay when seven houses at Honey Hill were destroyed and 31 persons rendered homeless. A spark from a passing engine ignited the thatch of a cottage, the flames spreading so rapidly that all attempts to save anything were hopeless. It engulfed other cottages in the row then quickly reached the Swan Inn which was completely gutted. The Potton Brigade arrived with their manual engine but their services were useless owing to a defective hose and the scarcity of the water supply. 11 08 11c

1912 03 29

Sergt Gilbey told magistrates he had visited James Chipperfield's cinematograph show at Gamlingay. The building, advertised to accommodate 1,000 people, was three-quarters full. Two men were working the cinematograph machine which was in an iron-lined case. He saw one bucket of sand and one of water, there was a blanket – a piece of horse cloth 15 inches square - but there was no grenade or fire extinguisher. Had there been an outbreak of fire the consequences might have been serious. The firm said they had more fire exits than required and nobody else had complained. But they were fined 16 shillings. 12 03 29j

1912 05 31

Gamlingay – death has been very busy, six dying at same time – 12 05 31i

1912 06 28

Some little excitement was caused on Saturday evening by several balloons travelling over Gamlingay in a northerly direction. One dropped within shouting distance and having ascertained its whereabouts, rose and floated away. The aeronauts were taking part in a long-distance contest from Hurlingham and some reached Yorkshire before descending. 12 06 28k

1913 01 03

Gamlingay poaching

Gamlingay – Hull's Picture Exhibition now standing at Green End and giving entertainments nightly to fairly large audiences

Gamlingay slate clubs

1913 01 10

Gamlingay fowl theft

Gamlingay beauty show

1913 02 14

Caxton licensing cmte object to Gamlingay Three Horse Shoes, Elsworth Three Horse Shoes & Bourn King William IV

1913 03 14

Magistrates discussed pubs at Bourn. The King William was a beerhouse and belonged to Messrs Phillips of Royston It was built of plaster and thatch with four rooms downstairs, one sub-let as a butcher's shop. The tap-room was very small. The Greyhound, a fully-licensed house opposite was a much better house while the Golden Lion had much better accommodation and stabling. The Duke of Wellington beerhouse was also better constructed. The population was 655 with 108 children on the school books. Gamlingay Three Horseshoes, Elsworth Three Horseshoes., Papworth Everard Kisby's Hut destroyed by fire

1913 09 05

The Vicar of Gamlingay and his wife were entering their grounds when he thought he saw two figures moving about. Fearing that burglars had designs on the Vicarage chickens he rang the alarm bell twice. There was no response so he fired a pistol. Two neighbours were so alarmed by the shot that they bolted. The dog was let loose and searched but found no one. Police could find no traces and the scare subsided. One neighbour feared suffragettes had attempted to set fire to the parish church 13 09 05 p6

1913 10 17

Gamlingay suicide

1913 10 24

Gamlingay see Bovril airship

1913 11 14

Public houses compensation awards: Melbourn Tailors Arms, Over Sow & Pigs & Black Horse, Dry Drayton Five Bells, Gamlingay Three Horse Shoes, Elsworth Three Horse Shoes, Bourn King William IV, Girton White Horse, Cottenham Red Lion, Willingham Black Lion, Shakespeare Newmarket Rd

1913 11 21

Caxton Guardians need for housing Gamlingay, Lt Gransden

1914 07 17

An attendance officer testified that he'd found a 12-year-old lad employed in picking up potatoes in a field when he should be at Gamlingay school. The boy had gone with his father's breakfast and begged to be allowed to stay and help him. His mother alleged the schoolmaster employed boys to dig his private garden when they were marked as in attendance at school. Magistrates said that perhaps the schoolmaster was teaching them gardening. "I don't think he was. He was in school at the time", she relied

1914 07 24

Gamlingay school gardens

1914 09 04

Recruiting Royston, Shelford, Bourn, Wicken, Soham, Gamlingay

1914 10 02

Gamlingay statute fair

1914 10 30

Belgians – Waterbeach not help, Soham arrivals, Burwell, Bourn, Cottenham, Duxford, Gamlingay, Gt Eversden, Histon, Linton, Over, Sawston, Swavesey, Chatteris, Cheveley

1914 11 06

Belgians – Littleport, Burwell, Chatteris, Duxford, Comberton, Sawston, Elsworth, Fen Drayton, Swavesey, Fordham, West Wickham, Wicken, Gamlingay, Willingham, Madingley, Isleham, Landbeach, Linton, Lode, Oakington,

1914 12 04

Belgians Gamlingay

1914 12 11

Ickleton, Gamlingay Belgians

1914 12 25

Gamlingay cottages Heath Rd & Cinque Rd

1921 07 27

Gamlingay two cottages destroyed fire – 21 07 27d

1923 11 10

A disastrous fire occurred in Mill St Gamlingay when four houses were entirely gutted and their occupants rendered homeless. Messages were set for the Potton and Sandy brigades. Very fortunately owing to the recent heavy rains, Spittle Pit was full of water and this proved of great value, as there has always been great difficulty in pumping water from the brook over the railway bridge. On three other occasions during the past year thatched dwellings in Mill Street have been destroyed by fire. This brings into prominence the scarcity of homes for the people of the village, as new houses are seldom built to replace those destroyed

1924 02 25c

A Gamlingay bird catcher was summonsed for causing unnecessary suffering to a linnet. An RSPCA inspector said he saw him near a hedge. He noticed several nets used for catching birds and that he was using a linnet with a brace attached as a decoy bird. The brace was chafing its shoulder blades. Defendant replied “I have been doing this for 50 years. The farmers pay me for catching the birds”. He was fined 10s, not for catching the birds but for the manner in which he caught them

1924 05 26c

On Tuesday night West Cambridgeshire was visited with a thunderstorm considered to have been the worst since 1913. Rainfall was exceptionally heavy, indeed in many places nothing equalling it has been experienced within living memory. At Gamlingay crops in the fields suffered severely, potatoes being washed out of the soil in many places and much land was still under water next morning. In places the potato ridges were completely washed away, and great gulleys many yards wide and several feet deep were scoured out, and many tons of earth washed away. Near Potton the main road was encumbered with great banks of soil washed down from the fields above and great gaps were cut in the bank by the roadside, down which the water and mud poured on to the road like a cataract

1931 12 18

Gamlingay parish council has been told it may not get electricity for a considerable time. The Electricity Company has plans for a line from Eltisley to Meldreth in the future but there are many hundreds of towns and villages still waiting supply and the demand in Gamlingay is small. If factories were erected it would receive more favourable attention. 31 12 18d

1932 10 21

Considerable excitement was caused at Gamlingay when a delivery van crashed head first through the front of Mr Cope's dwelling at the corner of the Cross. No one was injured and the van only slightly damaged, but the house will require a new door and window. Only last week the Parish Council had asked the County Surveyor to provide white lines at these dangerous cross-roads. 32 10 21c

1935 11 07

Dr Gasteen of Gamlingay complained that a number of villagers were suffering from diarrhoea and sickness which he attributed to the quality of the water and in one case death had been accelerated by drinking it. Instructions had been given to boil water before use. Few of the wells were safe and the contamination was due to lack of sewerage facilities. He felt that a policy of evasion or obstruction was being pursued by the RDC. But councillors said it was a pity he did not come to the council and help carry out some of their things he suggested and no further action was taken 35 11 07

1935 11 28

Sir- This season Gamlingay Football Club are having great difficulty in finding eleven players as the stars have been chosen to play for better teams. The side consists of youngsters who are gamely fighting against great odds to keep the team going, aided by one or two older players who had finished with football but sportingly came to their help. In spite of not winning a single League game all went well until one match when the referee gave a penalty and suspended a player. His autocratic manner savoured of Hitlerism and now the Football Association have closed the ground for a month. I am convinced that a grave injustice has been done" – C.H. Careless 35 11 28b

1936 12 03

Clara Harris, the grand old lady of showland, celebrated her 100th birthday in her caravan at Haslingfield. She was the daughter of a showman, Larry Shaw, who was the first steam roundabout proprietor. In 1869 she married Moe Harris of Gamlingay and assisted him at fairgrounds around England. Clara worked until she was 93; the last fair was at Royston where she sat behind her stall selling sweets she'd made herself. Two of her five daughters carry on the tradition. 36 12 03b

1938 01 12

Three football grounds have been closed by the Cambs FA following complaints. At Gamlingay a referee had been threatened with violence by spectators who followed him to the dressing room, at Foxton a crowd had gathered round the ref, booing and shouting while at Barrington there'd been foul language during a match against the Railway Social team. The Council are determined to put a stop to such disorderly conduct. 38 01 12

1938 02 14

Gamlingay plane crash – 38 02 14

1938 07 14

The Bursar of Downing College complained that water supply to cottages they owned near Valley Farm, Croydon, had been affected by the new Gamlingay and Lt Gransden water scheme. It was a bored well to the greensand and always provided an adequate supply but since the last pumping operations the water had completely failed. Tenants had to fetch water from the standpipe at Toll Bar Bungalow. He asked the RDC to meet half the cost of connecting the cottage to the main 38 07 14a & b

1941 08 01

Oldest Inhabitant. Gamlingay has lost its oldest inhabitant by the death of Mr. John Brittain, of Heath Road, who passed peacefully away on Tuesday morning at the great age of 96 years. During his long life he enjoyed remarkably good health, and up to within a week or so he was about as usual, and still enjoyed the pipe of tobacco, of which he was very fond. He retained all his faculties to a remarkable degree, and could tell many interesting stories of the days of his youth. He resided with his daughter, Mrs. E. Croot, and had two granddaughters, one grandson and a great grandchild. For many years he carried on the business of market gardener at Gamlingay Heath, and his familiar figure will be greatly missed. 41 08 01

1941 10 10

Married 50 years. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Pledger, of the Grange, Longstanton, and formerly of Church Street, Gamlingay, were married on September 28, 1891, and are now 76 and 77 respectively. To celebrate the event. 30 guests were entertained at "Rutholme", Swavesey, the home of their youngest daughter. The toast of the couple, who were in excellent health, was proposed by Mr. Victor Pledger, of Barkway, the youngest brother of Mr. Pledger, and the aged pair replied, thanking everyone for the flowers, presents and greetings which had been sent them.

1943 09 10

Death of Mr. W. Housden. The death occurred on August 30 of Mr Walter Housden, of Council Houses, Gamlingay. On his retirement from the Cambs. Constabulary, ex-Sergeant Housden came with his wife to reside in Gamlingay. When taken ill some weeks ago, he and his wife went to reside with their son at Soham, where he passed away to the regret of all who knew him.

1943 10 08

Golden Wedding. Mr. and Mrs. A. Hutchinson, of the Fountain Inn, Dennis Green, Gamlingay, celebrated their golden wedding on Saturday. For many years Mr. Alfred Hutchinson was employed in the Hatley Park Gardens, and now works part-time in the garden of Mr. W. J. Empson, of Gamlingay. They have two sons, one daughter and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the majority of whom are residing in the village and they were all able to participate in the celebration.

1949 02 18

The extraordinary elusiveness of Airey houses was referred to at the South Cambs R.D.C. when criticism was made of the pace at which this type of house is being built. The Gamlingay councillor said: "You see the site one minute and the next week the houses. You get the legs, then the timber on the roof and there it stops. They seem to be a sort of evil thing. They look like houses and cause a nice glow in the hearts of the populace, but there is really nothing there. They're airy! They're eerie!"

1949 04 16

South Cambridgeshire Rural District Council are of the opinion that Gamlingay should remain in Cambridgeshire with the exception of that portion near Tempsford station. Mr C.H. Careless said this vitally affected village people and they should have the last word. "You must remember that we are Bedfordshire for practically every convenience – postal, labour exchange, railways etc. We have not a single bus running daily into any Cambridgeshire centre".

1951 09 27

Woodbury Hall, Gamlingay, formerly "one of the showpieces of the district" was requisitioned for troops at the outbreak of war. "The troops did their best to demolish the place and ruin it, and before they had finished with it, it caught fire", councillors were told. The owner, Capt. Astell had applied to the Ministry of Works for £14,000 to put it in some sort of order so that he could live in it again, but they were going to allow only £4,000. It was absolutely disgusting that an officer and gentleman who did what he could for his country could not get his house back in order.

1955 04 07

A Gamlingay councillor asked whether South Cambs RDC had powers to refuse permission to a horde of caravanners who had managed to beat the Planning Committee. They were told that their site should be hidden from the road and then put up ten feet of zinc which made it even more hideous. He referred to a bungalow they had built with their own labour which he called 'a monstrosity'. Now two more parties have pitched into fields and are going to be as much nuisance as the others. 'If we allow two more places like the one we have got then Gamlingay will not be worth living in', he complained. But the Council's Sanitary Officer said that provided they complied with Public Health regulations they were obliged to issue a licence. 55 04 07a

1956 03 28

Proposals to purchase a caravan for use as a staff room at Gamlingay school were described as an insult to the whole parish. An alternative was to use a disused Isleham hut; it needed a new floor and new sides but would cost £200, a third of the price of the caravan. The village had already sacrificed two badly-needed council houses for teachers. 56 03 28a

1956 07 06

A Lyndome twin caravan has been specially designed for Gamlingay County School. When joined together on site it will have a main staff room in one half and a private room and kitchenette in the other. BBC Television visited the school to record the opening of a new play corner and paddling pool created on a rubbish heap by headmaster J.T. Robinson and the woodwork master, Mr N. Freeman. It will be shown on Children's newsreel. 56 07 06b. 56 07 11

The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 03 11

Cambridge Independent Press illustrated feature on Gamlingay – 60 03 11 CIP

1960 09 15

The new Dottrell Hall Pumping Station, which is to supply water for South Cambridgeshire's comprehensive water supply scheme is nearing completion. Water mains have been laid at Pampisford and Babraham with Fowlmere and Thriplow to follow. But residents of Gamlingay Heath who petitioned for extensions to their village sewers will be disappointed. The scheme would cost £500 for every house served and would not be approved by the Ministry 60 09 15

1962 07 02

Longstowe villagers are angry that their water was completely shut off for three days. At midnight just a trickle of water came through allowing people to fill buckets and cans. Postmistress Mrs A.M. Prewett was constantly asked to telephone the District Council. They said the water was only shut off at night but the heavy demand was too great for the main, resulting in the daytime shortage. It was not until the Fire Brigade arrived with containers that the water came on in the taps. Gamlingay and several other villages also experienced difficulties. 62 07 02

1963 07 22

Engraved plate showing the Maypole Farm, Church Street, Gamlingay, since pulled down – 63 07 22

1963 12 06

British Railways announced plans to close the Oxford to Cambridge line through Bletchley and Bedford, despite proposals in the Beeching Report for modified passenger services. A financial appraisal shows the line is losing money. MP Francis Pym says he has been approached by constituents in Gamlingay and Longstowe and will take every step to make local views known to the Minister of Transport. There will be a detailed examination and consultations before closure takes effect. 63 12 06

1963 12 06

Gamlingay Full Range school gives pupils aged 5-15 a unique education; they discuss newspaper coverage of current affairs and study thatching and car maintenance having built a garage for the school minibus. There is a large garden growing produce for school meals with the remainder being sold. After the four o'clock bell come clubs like match-box-top collecting, horse management and canoe-building. Retiring Headmaster J.T.C. Robinson MBE has been ahead of contemporary education. But soon the senior pupils will be transferred to the newly-planned Village College 63 12 06g

1964 10 16

Gamlingay Cinques Common nature reserve – feature – 64 10 16a

1964 12 14

Gamlingay church fabric worse than thought – 64 12 14

1965 01 05

Gamlingay church bells ring again – 65 01 05a

1972 11 13

The roof was torn off a Cambridge house and hurled down the street as 60 m.p.h. gales and torrential rain swept through Mid-Anglia during the night. The storm left a trail of chaos throughout the area, with trees uprooted, chimneys dislodged and motorists stranded by water-logged cars. Hundreds of trees were uprooted in the region and villagers at King's Ripton, near Huntingdon turned out in the early hours to clear a tree which blocked the Ramsey Road. The storm caused widespread power cuts; one of the biggest failures was at Gamlingay where 200 consumers were without power

1974 09 10

Anglian Water Authority have asked Souths Cambs district council to refuse permission for any new development and severely restrict building in a further 19 because of the overloading of the sewage treatment works, Milton, whose drains lead into the Cambridge works has suffered from a development embargo for the last four years. It is now joined by Shelford, Girton, Histon and Fen Ditton where a complete ban on development is requested. At Over, Gamlingay and Bassingbourn permission will only be given to one-building application. All of these sewage works have been badly overloaded for some time but the cuts in public spending have prevented AWA from going ahead with extension schemes

1975 04 18

The Government has given permission to the giant Shell petrol company to look for oil in south Cambridgeshire. The area selected extends from Gt Shelford up to Royston and southwards through Hertfordshire as far as Buntingford. In the west it takes in Ashwell, Steeple Morden and Gamlingay, while in the east it extends almost to Saffron Walden. The actual drilling areas have not yet been selected. Nearly six years ago an American oil company planned to make test borings in the north Cambridgeshire fens. A few years before that tests were made near Saffron Walden. Nothing came of either project

1976 01 05

About 700 homes in mid-Anglia were without electricity today – more than 48 hours after the gales. The areas hit by major faults included Saffron Walden, Ickleton, Burwell, Littleport, Haddenham, Gamlingay and Melbourn. Up until yesterday afternoon between 1,500 and 2,000 homes had been without power. The Fire Brigade dealt with 150 emergency calls and had all their appliances working to make wind-damaged property safe. Thirty caravans were blown over at Caravan International's Newmarket site.

1976 09 29

Wine production in the region will be more than doubled this year as vineyards reach maturity. But prospects of a vintage year have been shattered by the recent warm damp weather which has proved an ideal climate for diseases. At Linton Mr Sam Alper of Chilford Hall said they were now pressing the grapes. Mr G. Reece of Gamlingay Vineyard is finding the disease troubles "a bit of a nuisance". Mr Norman Sneesby thinks his vines at Wilburton will bring a yield of ten tons while Mr Ron Jeffries of Saffron Walden who started Wenden Vineyard four years ago hopes to improve on last year's 1,000 bottles from his one acre site.

1982 09 01

A St Neots firm's publicity gimmick in the shape of a giant silver balloon did its job too well – it became a UFO soaring over three counties. The runaway 12ft balloon broke free from its moorings at the Hi-Sell Direct furniture warehouse at Gamlingay and floated about 10 foot above the ground until it was caught by a farmer and tied to the roof of a police car. 82 09 01